

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of aligning a boundary between bytes of a deserialized serial data signal that has been input into a programmable logic device, said programmable logic device having a serial data interface with a plurality of channels, and having a programmable logic core, said method comprising:

receiving a respective serial data signal on each respective channel of said serial data interface; for each said channel, deserializing said serial data signal, including inserting an initial candidate byte boundary between selected bits of said deserialized data signal; transmitting said deserialized data signal with said initial candidate byte boundary from each said channel of said serial data interface to said programmable logic core; processing said deserialized signal with said initial candidate byte boundary on each said channel in said programmable logic core to validate each said initial candidate byte boundary; and sending a respective byte alignment error signal from said programmable logic core to a respective channel of said serial data interface when said candidate boundary on said respective channel is determined to be invalid.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising: assigning based on said error signal an alternate candidate byte boundary between different selected bits of said deserialized data signal on said respective channel of said serial data interface; retransmitting said deserialized data signal with said alternate candidate byte boundary from said respective channel of said serial data interface to said programmable logic core; and

10 reprocessing said retransmitted
deserialized data signal with said alternate candidate
byte boundary in said programmable logic core to validate
said alternate candidate byte boundary.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein:
 said error signal indicates a number of
bits of discrepancy in said byte boundary; and
 said assigning an alternate candidate byte
5 boundary comprises moving said byte boundary by said
number of bits of discrepancy.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein:
 said assigning an alternate candidate byte
boundary comprises moving said byte boundary by one bit;
and
5 said sending, said assigning, said
retransmitting and said reprocessing occur iteratively
until said reprocessing determines that said alternate
candidate byte boundary is correct.

5. A method of aligning a boundary between
bytes of a deserialized serial data signal that has been
input into a programmable logic device, said programmable
logic device having a serial data interface with a
5 plurality of channels, and having a programmable logic
core, said method comprising:
 receiving a respective serial data signal
on each respective channel of said serial data interface;
 for each said channel, deserializing said
10 serial data signal, including inserting an initial
candidate byte boundary between selected bits of said
deserialized data signal;
 transmitting said deserialized data signal
with said initial candidate byte boundary from each said
15 channel of said serial data interface to said programmable
logic core; and
 receiving a respective byte alignment error
signal from said programmable logic core on a respective

channel of said serial data interface when said candidate
20 boundary is determined in said programmable logic core to
be invalid.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:
assigning based on said error signal an
alternate candidate byte boundary between different
selected bits of said respective deserialized data signal
5 on said respective channel of said serial data interface;
retransmitting said deserialized data
signal with said alternate candidate byte boundary from
said respective channel of said serial data interface to
said programmable logic core; and
10 again receiving a byte alignment error
signal from said programmable logic core on said
respective channel of said serial data interface when said
candidate boundary is determined in said programmable
logic core to be invalid.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein:
said error signal indicates a number of
bits of discrepancy in said byte boundary; and
said assigning an alternate candidate byte
5 boundary comprises moving said byte boundary by said
number of bits of discrepancy.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein:
said assigning an alternate candidate byte
boundary comprises moving said byte boundary by one bit;
and
5 said receiving, said assigning and said
retransmitting occur iteratively until said alternate
candidate byte boundary is determined in said programmable
logic core to be correct.

9. A programmable logic device comprising:
a programmable logic core; and
a serial data interface adapted to receive
and deserialize a serial data signal including a plurality

5 of channels of serial data, said serial data interface
comprising bit-slipping circuitry on each said channel
adapted to insert a byte boundary between bits of each
respective deserialized data signal on each said channel,
said bit-slipping circuitry being responsive to a bit-
10 slipping control signal from said programmable logic core.

10. The programmable logic device of claim 9
wherein said bit-slipping circuitry comprises bit-handling
circuitry and control circuitry that controls said bit-
handling circuitry responsive to said bit-slipping control
5 signal.

11. The programmable logic device of claim 10
wherein:
each byte includes a first number of bits;
and
5 said bit-handling circuitry comprises:
at least one shift register for receiving
said serial data, and having capacity to hold a second
number of bits greater than said first number of bits, and
further having a number of parallel outputs equal to said
10 second number of bits, and
selection circuitry having a number of
selection inputs equal to said number of parallel outputs
of said at least one shift register, and having a number
of selection outputs equal to said first number of bits,
15 said selection inputs being connected to said parallel
outputs of said at least one shift register; wherein:
said control circuitry controls which of
said selection inputs is connected to said selection
outputs.

12. The programmable logic device of claim 11
wherein said selection circuitry is a barrel shifter.

13. The programmable logic device of claim 11
wherein said second number of bits is twice said first
number of bits.

14. The programmable logic device of claim 13 wherein said at least one shift register comprises two shift registers chained serially, each of said shift registers having capacity to hold said first number of
5 bits.

15. A serial data interface for use with a programmable logic device having a programmable logic core, said serial data interface being adapted to receive and deserialize a serial data signal including a plurality
5 of channels of serial data, said serial data interface comprising:

bit-slipping circuitry on each of said channels adapted to insert a byte boundary between bits of each respective deserialized serial data signal on each
10 respective channel, said bit-slipping circuitry being responsive to a bit-slipping control signal from said programmable logic core.

16. The serial data interface of claim 15 wherein said bit-slipping circuitry comprises bit-handling circuitry and control circuitry that controls said bit-handling circuitry responsive to said bit-slipping control
5 signal.

17. The serial data interface of claim 16 wherein:

each byte includes a first number of bits;
and
5 said bit-handling circuitry comprises:
at least one shift register for receiving said serial data, and having capacity to hold a second number of bits greater than said first number of bits, and further having a number of parallel outputs equal to said
10 second number of bits, and
selection circuitry having a number of selection inputs equal to said number of parallel outputs of said at least one shift register, and having a number

of selection outputs equal to said first number of bits,
15 said selection inputs being connected to said parallel
outputs of said at least one shift register; wherein:
said control circuitry controls which of
said selection inputs is connected to said selection
outputs.

18. The serial data interface of claim 17
wherein said selection circuitry is a barrel shifter.

19. The serial data interface of claim 17
wherein said second number of bits is twice said first
number of bits.

20. The serial data interface of claim 19
wherein said at least one shift register comprises two
shift registers chained serially, each of said shift
registers having capacity to hold said first number of
5 bits.

21. A programmable logic device comprising the
serial data interface of claim 15.

22. A digital processing system comprising:
processing circuitry;
a memory coupled to said processing
circuitry; and
5 a programmable logic device as defined in
claim 21 coupled to the processing circuitry and the
memory.

23. A printed circuit board on which is mounted
a programmable logic device as defined in claim 21.

24. The printed circuit board defined in
claim 23 further comprising:
memory circuitry mounted on the printed
circuit board and coupled to the programmable logic
5 device.

25. The printed circuit board defined in claim 24 further comprising:

processing circuitry mounted on the printed circuit board and coupled to the memory circuitry.

26. A digital processing system comprising:
processing circuitry;

a memory coupled to said processing circuitry; and

5 a programmable logic device as defined in claim 9 coupled to the processing circuitry and the memory.

27. A printed circuit board on which is mounted a programmable logic device as defined in claim 9.

28. The printed circuit board defined in claim 27 further comprising:

memory circuitry mounted on the printed circuit board and coupled to the programmable logic
5 device.

29. The printed circuit board defined in claim 28 further comprising:

processing circuitry mounted on the printed circuit board and coupled to the memory circuitry.